# THE INDEPENDENT MUSICIAN'S BLUEPRINT

## FROM DISTRIBUTION TO VERIFICATION

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO RELEASING, MANAGING, AND VERIFYING YOUR MUSIC ACROSS ALL MAJOR PLATFORMS

ALWAYSBESMILE
MD ABDUL AHAD SHANTO

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THE INDEPENDENT MUSICIAN'S BLUEPRINT: FROM DISTRIBUTION TO VERIFICATION

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Written by **MD Abdul Ahad Shanto** (writing professionally as AlwaysBeSmile, both referring to the same individual author).

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# Chapter 1 — The Modern Music Ecosystem (Big Picture)

## 1.1 A New Era of Music

The music world has changed more in the last twenty years than in the previous hundred.
A few decades ago, artists depended entirely on record labels, radio, and physical stores.
Today, anyone with a laptop and an internet connection can release music worldwide within hours.
Streaming, social media, and digital distribution have completely redefined how artists share their creativity with the world.
This change brought freedom — but also confusion.
Where does your song actually go after you upload it?
Who owns which part of the music?
And why are there so many different platforms, databases, and identifiers connected to one song?
That's what this book aims to simplify.
By understanding how the modern music ecosystem works, you can take control of your catalog, your data, and your income.

# 1.2 From Artist to Listener: The Journey of a Song

Let's trace a song's path from your studio to your listener's headphones:

1. Creation:
You write, record, and mix your track.

2. Distribution:
A music distributor (like TuneCore or DistroKid) delivers your audio and metadata to streaming services and stores.

3. Streaming Platforms (DSPs):
Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, and others host and stream your song to listeners.

4. Databases and Metadata:
Systems such as MusicBrainz, Discogs, and AllMusic record your release information for reference, crediting, and discovery.

5. Publishing and Royalties:
Performing Rights Organizations (PROs) and publishing administrators track plays and collect royalties.

6. Analytics and Promotion:
You track performance data, build your audience, and refine your next release strategy.

Every step involves multiple players — each with its own data requirements and financial responsibilities. Understanding who does what is your first step toward managing your career

professionally.

# 1.3 The Key Players

a) Artists and Songwriters
The creators. You are at the center of the ecosystem. You own the composition (if you wrote it) and possibly the recording (if you produced it yourself).
b) Distributors and Aggregators
Services like TuneCore, DistroKid, CD Baby, or RouteNote deliver your music to hundreds of platforms.
They handle metadata (titles, credits, ISRCs, and UPCs) and sometimes collect royalties for you.
c) Streaming and Download Platforms (DSPs)
These are where listeners consume your music: Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Deezer, Pandora, YouTube Music, etc.
Each has its own algorithm, profile system, and analytics dashboard.
d) Music Databases
Non-commercial archives like MusicBrainz, Discogs, AllMusic, ISNI, and VIAF store structured information about your releases and identity.
These act as long-term references and often connect to knowledge panels or voice assistants.
e) Publishing and Rights Organizations
Societies such as BMI, PRS, ASCAP, or JASRAC handle songwriting royalties.
They collect and distribute money when your song is performed, broadcast, or streamed publicly.
f) Licensing and Lyric Databases
Platforms like LyricFind and Musixmatch manage official lyrics licensing, ensuring that artists get credit and compensation when lyrics appear on services.
g) Metadata Services and Identification Systems
Organizations such as IFPI, ISNI, and SoundExchange provide identifiers (UPC, ISRC, ISNI) that help trace recordings and rights holders across all systems.

# 1.4 How All These Connect

Think of the music industry as a web, not a ladder.
The song you release through your distributor feeds data simultaneously into:

- Streaming platforms → for playback and listener reach.
- Databases → for indexing, crediting, and long-term reference.
- PROs → for royalty tracking.
- Search engines and knowledge panels → for public information.

Accurate metadata links all these parts.
If your ISRC or artist name is inconsistent, some systems may treat your song as a different recording — which can cause missing royalties or incorrect profiles.
That's why this ebook emphasizes databases and metadata just as much as creativity.
Good metadata ensures your music identity stays consistent across the internet.

# 1.5 Why This Knowledge Matters

Knowing the structure of the modern ecosystem gives you control.

- You'll know where to claim your artist pages and correct wrong data.
- You'll understand how royalties are generated and tracked.
- You'll see how to connect your name across all databases and platforms, which strengthens your credibility and SEO.
- You'll make informed choices about distributors, PROs, and platforms.

Whether you're a solo musician, lyricist, or independent label, understanding this system helps you avoid confusion, duplicate profiles, and lost income.

# 1.6 Quick Recap Checklist

Before moving on to Chapter 2, make sure you:
1 Understand the main components of the digital music ecosystem.
2 Can name your distributor (or potential one) and what role it plays.
3 Know what DSPs (Digital Service Providers) are.
4 Realize the importance of accurate metadata (ISRC, UPC, artist name).
5 Recognize that databases and PROs are long-term identifiers for your career.

## 1.7 What's Next

Now that you've seen how the ecosystem fits together, Chapter 2 will take you deeper into music rights and ownership — so you'll know exactly what you own, what you share, and what you license when you distribute your music.

# Chapter 2 — Music Rights 101 (Copyright, Masters vs Publishing)

## 2.1 Understanding Music Ownership

Every song has two main parts:

1. The Composition – the melody, lyrics, and musical structure.

2. The Sound Recording (Master) – the actual audio file that people hear when they stream or download your track.

When you write and record a song, you automatically own both — unless you've given away or shared those rights by contract. Understanding the difference between these two parts is the foundation of managing your music career professionally.

# 2.2 The Composition (Publishing Rights)

This part belongs to songwriters, lyricists, and composers.
It covers everything written before recording: the melody, chord progression, lyrics, and structure.
Whenever your song is:

- Streamed
- Played on radio
- Performed live
- Used on TV or film

...you are owed publishing royalties.
Publishing royalties are collected and paid through Performing Rights Organizations (PROs) and Mechanical Rights Agencies.
Examples include:

- ASCAP, BMI (U.S.)
- PRS for Music (U.K.)
- SOCAN (Canada)
- JASRAC (Japan)
- BMI Bangladesh (via affiliated collection societies)

If you wrote and composed your own music, you're the publisher unless you sign a deal giving that responsibility to someone else.

# 2.3 The Sound Recording (Master Rights)

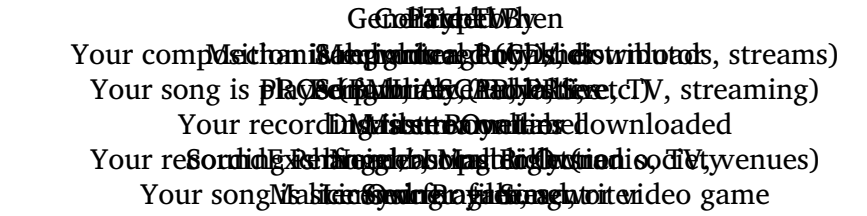
This part is owned by whoever pays for and produces the actual recording.
If you record your song at home and pay for it yourself, you own the master.
If a label pays for studio time, musicians, or mixing engineers, they usually own the master, unless you have a different written agreement.
Master ownership is extremely valuable because it's the version that generates royalties from:

- Streaming and digital downloads
- YouTube Content ID
- Sync licensing (movies, TV, games, ads)
- Performance rights for the recorded sound

When you distribute your music through a platform like TuneCore, you typically retain 100% ownership of your masters, but grant them a non-exclusive license to sell or stream the recording.

# 2.4 Types of Music Royalties

Here’s a simple breakdown of the main royalty categories you’ll encounter:




As an independent artist, you can be all of these at once — the songwriter, publisher, and master owner. That means all income flows back to you if your registrations are complete and accurate.

# 2.5 Common Confusion: Who Gets What?

Let's use a simple example.
You, AlwaysBeSmile, write a song called "hridoy rakhbo dhore poraner poran."
You record it, produce it, and distribute it through TuneCore.

You wrote it → you own publishing rights (the composition).
You recorded it → you own master rights (the sound recording).
TuneCore only has the right to deliver and monetize it on your behalf (non-exclusive).

If a film company wants to use your song, they'll need two licenses:
1. Master Use License – from you (the owner of the recording)

2. Synchronization License – also from you (the owner of the composition)

That's why it's crucial to understand both parts. If you sign away one without realizing it, you could lose half of your income.

# 2.6 Split Sheets — When You Collaborate

If you ever write music with others — producers, lyricists, or co-writers — use a split sheet.
A split sheet clearly states who owns what percentage of the composition and sometimes the master.
Example format:

| Contributor | Role | Split (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Always Smile | Composer, Lyricist | 70% |
| Friend B | Beat Producer | 30% |

Both sign and date it.
Later, these percentages are used when registering the song with PROs and distributors.

# 2.7 Registering Your Work

You can protect and monetize your work by registering with:

- A Performing Rights Organization (PRO): to collect performance royalties.
- A distributor (like TuneCore): to distribute and collect master royalties.
- A publishing administrator (like Songtrust or Sentric): optional, but useful for global mechanical royalties.
- Local copyright office: to prove authorship (optional but recommended).

# 2.8 When to Sign a Contract (and When Not To)

Labels and publishers can offer big opportunities, but read the terms carefully.

Ask yourself:

- Does this contract give away ownership, or only a license?
- How long is the agreement valid?
- Is it exclusive (they control all your releases) or non-exclusive (you can still release elsewhere)?
- Do you keep creative control and branding rights?

If you're new, start with non-exclusive agreements until you understand your value and legal position.

# 2.9 Quick Recap Checklist

1 Know the difference between composition and sound recording.
2 Identify who owns your masters and publishing.
3 Register with a PRO to collect songwriting royalties.
4 Use a split sheet when collaborating.
5 Keep all metadata (ISRC, UPC, credits) consistent.
6 Read contracts carefully — especially around ownership and exclusivity.

## 2.10 What’s Next

Now that you understand ownership and royalties, it’s time to learn how to prepare your music for distribution — with the right audio, metadata, and artwork to ensure it’s accepted by every major platform.

In Chapter 3 — Preparing Your Release, we’ll walk through the technical and creative steps to make your music ready for streaming worldwide.

# Chapter 3 — Preparing Your Release (Audio, Metadata, Artwork)

## 3.1 Why Preparation Matters

Releasing a song isn't just about uploading it. Every track that appears on Spotify, Apple Music, or YouTube Music has gone through a process of technical checks, metadata validation, and quality control.

If your files or information aren't correct, your release can be rejected, misattributed, or even blocked from appearing under your artist name. That's why this chapter focuses on getting everything right before distribution.

Think of this as your pre-release checklist — your roadmap to ensure your music looks and sounds professional everywhere.

# 3.2 Step 1 — Audio Quality & File Preparation

Your audio is the foundation. Even if your song is beautiful, bad mastering or wrong file format can ruin its presentation online.

a) Recommended Audio Specifications

- **Format**: WAV (16-bit or 24-bit, 44.1 kHz)
- **Channels**: Stereo (Left/Right)
- **Sample Rate**: 44.1 kHz
- **Bit Depth**: 16 or 24 bits
- **Loudness Target**: Around -14 LUFS integrated (for streaming)

These specs ensure your music meets streaming standards and passes quality control. Avoid MP3 uploads for distribution — they are compressed and may cause rejection or quality loss.

b) Mastering Tips for Streaming

Leave -1 dB true peak headroom to avoid clipping during encoding.
Use a limiter to control peaks, but don't over-compress.
Test your track on different devices (earphones, car speakers, Bluetooth speakers).
Check mono compatibility (important for phone playback).

c) Naming Conventions

Before you export your final mix, name your file clearly:

AlwaysBeSmile_HridoyRakhboDhorePoranerPoran_FINAL.wav

This helps you (and your distributor) keep files organized.

# 3.3 Step 2 — Metadata: The DNA of Your Music

Metadata is the invisible information attached to your release that tells platforms who you are, what the track is, and how to pay you.
Incorrect metadata can lead to:
Miscredited songs
Duplicate profiles
Missing royalties

a) Core Metadata Fields

| Field | Example |
|---|---|
| Your public artist name | Always NS/Single |
| Hridoy Rakhtaz (Optional) | Song Rakhtaz (Optional) |
| Hridoy Rakhtaz (Optional) | Rakhtaz (Optional) |
| Choose the Sub-Genre | Folk/Sub-genre |
| Main language | Language |
| MD Abdul Aziz Shah | Abdul Aziz Shah |
| The person who produced the track | Always Sonic |
| Unique ISRC Distributor | Unique ISRC Distributor |
| Assigned by Distributor | Release Identifier |
| Date Reviewed | 2023-09-15 |
| Copyright Line | Copyright Line |
| Explicit Content | Explicit Content |

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b) ISRC & UPC Explained
ISRC (International Standard Recording Code): Unique ID for each track.
Example: BD-ABC-23-00001
UPC (Universal Product Code): Unique ID for the entire release.
Example: 197188562301

Distributors usually generate these for you, but if you manage multiple releases, it's good to keep a spreadsheet tracking them.
c) Common Metadata Mistakes

✖ Using inconsistent artist names (e.g., “Always Be Smile” vs “AlwaysBeSmile”)
✖ Adding emojis or unnecessary symbols in song titles
✖ Wrong capitalization (e.g., all caps titles)
✖ Missing or fake credits
✖ Uploading songs that include unlicensed samples
A small typo can send your music to the wrong profile — so check every field twice.

# 3.4 Step 3 — Artwork Design and Requirements

Your cover artwork is the face of your release — it's what listeners see first on every platform.

a) Technical Requirements

Most distributors and DSPs (Digital Service Providers) require:

- **Format**: JPG or PNG
- **Size**: 3000 × 3000 pixels minimum
- **Color Mode**: RGB
- **Resolution**: 72–300 dpi
- **No Borders or Watermarks**
- **No URLs, logos, or social handles** (unless approved)
- **No misleading text** (like "New Album" or "Out Now")

b) Design Tips

- Keep it simple and consistent with your artist identity.
- Use contrasting colors for readability in thumbnail form.
- Avoid clutter — think minimal and bold.
- Match your genre's aesthetic (folk, electronic, trap, etc.).
- Keep your artist name/logo placement consistent across releases.

c) Legal Note

Only use artwork that you own or have permission to use. If you use AI-generated or stock images, check the licensing terms carefully to ensure commercial use is allowed.

# 3.5 Step 4 — Credits and Roles

Modern platforms like Spotify and Apple Music now display detailed credits. Adding these increases professionalism and search visibility.

Include:

Main Artist: AlwaysBeSmile
Composer/Lyricist: MD Abdul Ahad Shanto
Producer: AlwaysBeSmile
Mixing/Mastering Engineer: (if applicable)
Publisher: Self-Published or your publishing admin
Featured Artists: (if any)

Example:

Track: Hype Music
Main Artist: AlwaysBeSmile
Composer/Lyricist: MD Abdul Ahad Shanto
Producer: AlwaysBeSmile
Publisher: AlwaysBeSmile Music

# 3.6 Step 5 — Quality Control and Backup

Before distribution:

✓ Listen to your master file from start to finish (no skips, no distortion).

✓ Double-check ID3 tags (metadata embedded in file).

✓ Preview your artwork at small sizes (like Spotify thumbnail view).

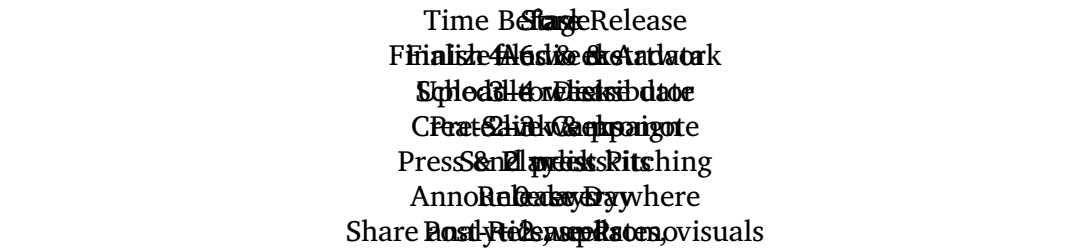
✓ Keep a backup folder with:

- WAV file
- Artwork
- Metadata sheet
- Lyrics text file
- ISRC/UPC list

This backup helps in case you ever switch distributors or need to re-upload your catalog.

# 3.7 Step 6 — Release Timing Strategy

Releasing music randomly hurts your visibility. Instead, plan your timeline:




A clear timeline helps your distributor deliver on time and gives platforms a chance to approve your release for playlists.

# 3.8 Quick Recap Checklist

Before you click “Distribute,” make sure:

✓ Your audio is WAV (16/24-bit, 44.1 kHz)

✓ Your loudness is near -14 LUFS

✓ Your metadata matches exactly across files and distributor forms

✓ You have your artwork in 3000 × 3000 px JPG/PNG

✓ You’ve added accurate credits and copyright info

✓ You have a backup folder for future use

# 3.9 What’s Next

You’re now ready to upload your music confidently.
But how do you choose which distributor to use, and how do their policies differ?
In Chapter 4 — Choosing a Distributor vs Direct Deals, we’ll compare popular distributors, explain exclusive vs non-exclusive licensing, and help you find the perfect fit for your needs as an independent artist.

# Chapter 4: Understanding Music Distribution

## 4.1 Introduction to Music Distribution

Music distribution is the process that delivers your music from your studio (or computer) to major streaming platforms and stores like Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, and more. In the past, distribution meant physically sending CDs or vinyl records to stores. Today, it's all about digital distribution — where online distributors handle the delivery of your digital audio files, cover art, and metadata to streaming services.

Digital distributors act as the bridge between artists and music platforms, making it possible for independent artists to share their music with listeners worldwide without needing a record label.

# 4.2 How Digital Music Distribution Works

Here's the basic flow of how modern distribution happens:
1. Upload – You submit your track, album artwork, and metadata (like title, artist name, genre, release date).

2. Verification – The distributor checks for errors, copyright issues, and audio quality.

3. Delivery – Once approved, the distributor sends your release to all selected platforms.

4. Streaming and Downloads – Your music becomes available for listeners.

5. Royalties – Each time someone streams or buys your track, the platform sends payments to your distributor, who then pays you.

This process ensures that your music reaches fans globally while protecting your rights as the creator.

# 4.3 Choosing the Right Distributor

Not all distributors are the same. Some are free with limited features, while others charge a fee per release or take a percentage of royalties. Choosing the right one depends on your goals, budget, and target audience.

Here are some popular distributors:

**TuneCore** – One-time annual fees per release, 100% royalties to you.

**DistroKid** – Annual subscription for unlimited uploads, 100% royalties.

**CD Baby** – One-time fee per release, takes a small percentage of royalties.

**Amuse** – Free distribution with optional paid plans for faster payments and more platforms.

**RouteNote** – Offers free and premium options (free takes 15% of royalties).

**Soundrop** – Great for cover songs, no annual fees.

Tip: Choose a distributor that supports all major platforms and allows metadata editing or artist profile claiming.

# 4.4 Free vs. Paid Distribution

Let's break down the main differences:

| Feature | Free Distribution | Paid Distribution |
|---|---|---|
| **Upfront Cost** | Free | One-time/annual fee |
| **Royalties** | 80–85% (distributor takes a cut) | 100% (you keep all earnings) |
| **Delivery Speed** | Slower | Faster |
| **Support** | Limited | Priority 24/7 |
| **Stores Supported** | Fewer | Most major platforms |
| **Metadata Editing** | Limited | Full control |

If you're just starting, free distribution can be a good way to test your music's reach. Once you start gaining traction, consider moving to a paid plan for full control and faster service.

# 4.5 Important Metadata for Distribution

Metadata is the hidden information attached to your music file that tells platforms who you are and what the song is about.
Here's what you'll need for every release:

- Artist Name / Stage Name – Must match across all platforms.
- Release Title – The official name of your single, EP, or album.
- Genre and Sub-Genre – Helps platforms recommend your music to the right listeners.
- Release Date – Plan ahead! It's best to set a release date at least 3–4 weeks later.
- Composer / Lyricist / Producer – Credit all contributors properly.
- ISRC (International Standard Recording Code) – Identifies your track globally.
- UPC (Universal Product Code) – Identifies the release as a product.
- Cover Art – Must meet quality and copyright guidelines (no logos or explicit images without notice).

# 4.6 Understanding ISRC and UPC Codes

These two codes are essential for music tracking and royalty collection:

- ISRC (International Standard Recording Code) – A unique 12-character code for each track. It's like a digital fingerprint for your recording. Example: BD-A12-24-00001
  - BD = Country (Bangladesh)
  - A12 = Registrant code
  - 24 = Year
  - 00001 = Track number

- UPC (Universal Product Code) – A code for the overall release (like an album or single). It helps stores and distributors manage sales and data.

Most distributors automatically assign ISRC and UPC codes for free, but you can also register your own if you prefer full control.

# 4.7 Release Planning and Strategy

To maximize your success, treat every release like a small campaign. Here's a simple plan:

1. Finish your track (mixing and mastering).

2. Create eye-catching cover art.

3. Upload to your distributor and choose a release date at least 3–4 weeks ahead.

4. Claim your artist profiles on major platforms (Spotify for Artists, Apple Music for Artists, etc.).

5. Pitch your song to playlists through your distributor or directly via artist dashboards.

6. Promote your release on social media and update your website.

7. Track your analytics and audience engagement post-release.

# 4.8 Common Distribution Mistakes to Avoid

1 Uploading unfinished or low-quality audio files.
2 Using copyrighted beats or cover art without permission.
3 Changing your artist name or metadata between releases.
4 Not leaving enough time before release day.
5 Ignoring platform guidelines (e.g., capitalization, symbols, explicit tags).

# 4.9 Summary

Music distribution is the backbone of your career as an independent artist. Understanding how it works — from metadata and ISRC codes to choosing the right distributor — ensures your music is available worldwide in the right way.

With the right preparation, you can distribute confidently, build consistency, and open the door to your next big chapter: Claiming and Managing Your Artist Profiles — which we'll explore in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 5: Claiming and Managing Your Artist Profiles

## 5.1 Introduction: Why Claiming Artist Profiles Matters

Claiming your artist profile is one of the most powerful steps you can take as a musician. It verifies that you are the official owner of your artist identity on streaming platforms and databases.

Once verified, you can:

Add or update your artist bio, image, and social links

Access real-time streaming analytics

Control your discography appearance and metadata

Promote new releases directly through editorial or algorithmic playlists

Verification isn't just about aesthetics—it's a crucial step to build trust, improve discoverability, and strengthen your brand presence across the digital music ecosystem.

# 5.2 How Verification Works

Most digital distributors (like TuneCore, DistroKid, recordJet, and CD Baby) automatically deliver your music to streaming platforms. Once your music is live, you can request verification on those platforms.

Verification links your distributor's delivery information (metadata, ISRCs, UPCs) with your artist identity to confirm ownership.

Each platform has its own verification process, but they all require:

A released track or album already available on that platform

Your artist name (exactly as it appears on your release)

Distributor or label name

Your email or account associated with the release

# 5.3 Claiming on Major Streaming Platforms

## 1. Spotify for Artists

Go to artists.spotify.com/claim.
Sign in with your Spotify account.
Search for your artist name (as it appears on Spotify).
Choose your profile and verify ownership using your distributor email or by linking your social media.
Once approved, you can:
Add/update bio and images
Access real-time audience data
Pitch your upcoming releases for editorial playlists

Tip: Verification is automatic once approved—your profile will display a blue checkmark.

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## 2. Apple Music for Artists

Visit artists.apple.com.
Sign in with your Apple ID.
Click “Request Artist Access.”
Search your artist name, then select your profile.
Verify your identity using your distributor info or social media links.
Once approved, you’ll gain access to:
Analytics (plays, song purchases, Shazam data)
Profile image uploads and artist bio editing

Tip: Always use your official release metadata (same name, label, and UPC) to speed up verification.

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## 3. YouTube Music / Official Artist Channel (OAC)

Your distributor (like TuneCore, DistroKid, or recordJet) can request an Official Artist Channel for you.
Requirements:
At least one official release distributed to YouTube Music.
A YouTube channel representing you as an artist.

Once approved, YouTube merges:
Your personal channel
Topic (auto-generated) channel
Vevo channel (if available)

Benefits:
Centralized discography under one verified profile
Access to YouTube Analytics for Artists
Customizable channel layout

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## 4. Deezer for Creators

Visit creators.deezer.com.
Sign up or log in using your artist account.
Choose “Claim your artist profile.”
Provide:
The link to your artist page on Deezer
Distributor details
Social media profiles

Once verified, you can edit your artist info and track analytics.

## 5. Amazon Music for Artists

Download the Amazon Music for Artists app or visit artists.amazonmusic.com.
Sign in with your Amazon account.
Search for your artist name and claim it.
Verify via social media or distributor.
After approval, you can:
View detailed insights
Update your profile image
Customize your background image on Alexa devices

## 6. Pandora AMP (Artist Marketing Platform)

Go to amp.pandora.com/claim-artist.
Fill out the claim form and link your Pandora artist page.
Verification may take a few days.
Once verified, you gain access to:
Pandora's AMP dashboard
Audience insights
Track promotion tools like "Featured Tracks"

# 5.4 Managing Your Artist Profiles Effectively

After claiming, maintaining consistency is key:
Use the same artist name, bio, and profile photo across all platforms.
Update your profile picture before each major release.
Regularly review analytics (streams, demographics, sources).
Keep your social links updated (Instagram, YouTube, website).
Respond to trends—if one platform is performing better, focus your promotion there.

Tip: Always crosscheck metadata between your distributor and artist dashboards. Incorrect data can cause duplicate profiles or loss of verification.

# 5.5 Troubleshooting Common Issues

| Problem | Solution |
| --- | --- |
| Duplicate artist profiles | Contact your distributor to request a merge. |
| Profile not found | Wait 3–5 days after release; the platform may need time to index your name. |
| Wrong metadata | Ask your distributor to correct it and re-deliver. |
| Verification denied | Reapply using the exact same email and link your social media pages. |

## 5.6 Summary

Claiming your artist profiles gives you full creative control and audience insight across all platforms. It connects your identity, builds credibility, and lets fans recognize your official pages instantly.

By verifying your artist pages on Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, Pandora, and others, you ensure that your music is truly yours — both artistically and digitally.

In the next chapter, we'll explore how to create, edit, and sync your lyrics across databases like LyricFind, Musixmatch, and Genius, helping fans connect deeper with your songs.

# Chapter 6: Lyrics and Lyric Databases

## 6.1 Introduction: The Power of Lyrics in the Digital Age

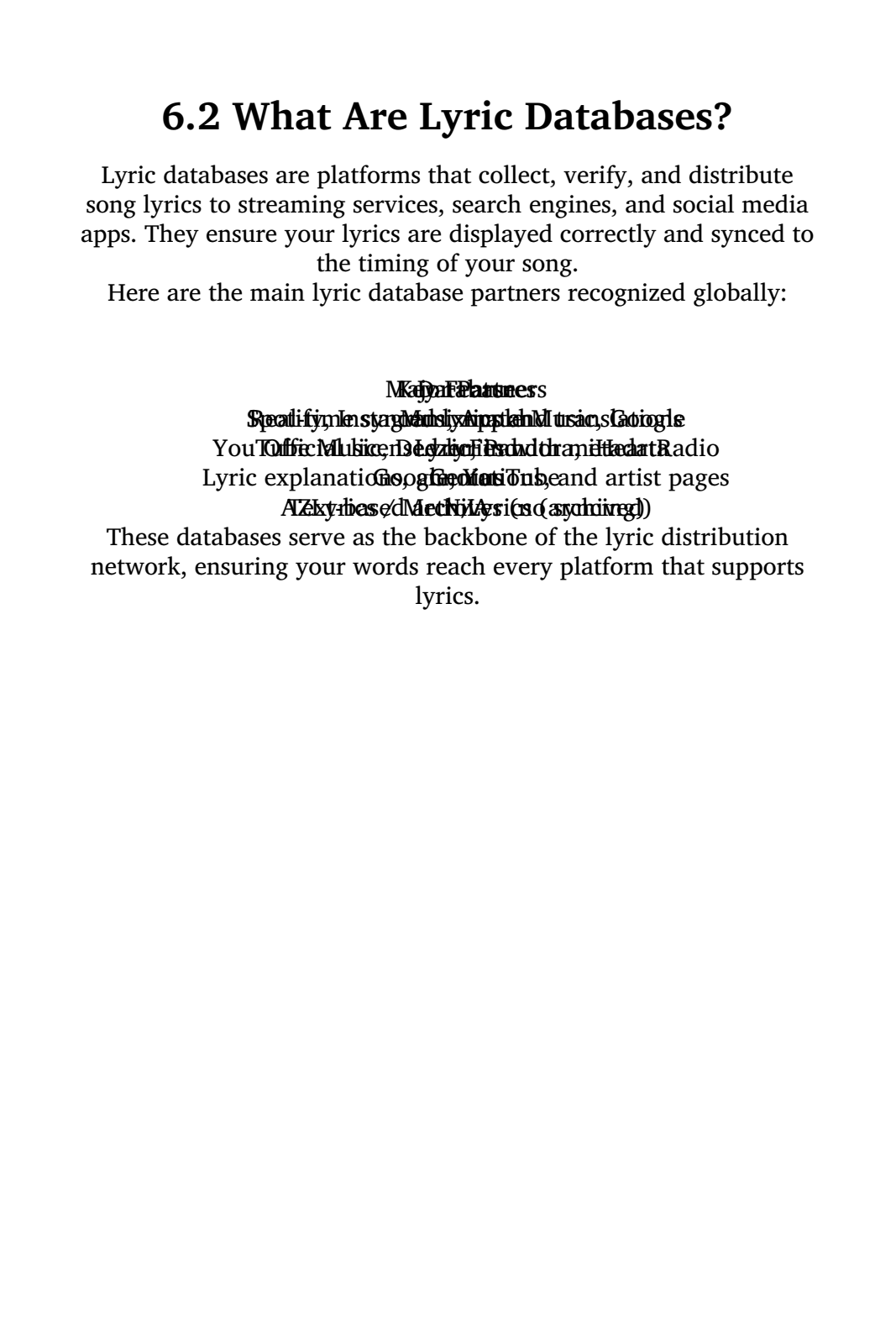
Lyrics are more than just words—they're a connection between the artist and the listener. In the digital era, lyrics play a major role in music discovery, audience engagement, and search visibility. When your lyrics appear correctly on Spotify, Apple Music, Instagram, or Google, fans can sing along, share your words in stories, and even find your songs through lyric searches.

To make this possible, your lyrics need to be submitted to official lyric databases that partner with major streaming platforms.

# 6.2 What Are Lyric Databases?

Lyric databases are platforms that collect, verify, and distribute song lyrics to streaming services, search engines, and social media apps. They ensure your lyrics are displayed correctly and synced to the timing of your song.

Here are the main lyric database partners recognized globally:




These databases serve as the backbone of the lyric distribution network, ensuring your words reach every platform that supports lyrics.

# 6.3 Submitting Your Lyrics to Musixmatch

Musixmatch is the largest lyric database, and it powers lyric display for Spotify, Instagram, Apple Music, and Tidal.
Here's how to submit and sync your lyrics:
1. Go to https://www.musixmatch.com.

2. Sign up as an Artist or Verified Contributor.

3. Claim your artist profile (verification usually takes a few days).

4. Once verified:
Add your lyrics manually for each release.
Use the Lyric Synchronization Tool to match words to the timing of your music.
Submit translations if you have multilingual audiences.

Tip: Always upload the official lyrics that match the released version exactly. Do not include ad-libs or background vocals unless essential.

Common Mistake to Avoid:

Don’t upload lyrics before your song is released. Musixmatch requires that the track is already available on streaming services.

# 6.4 Submitting Your Lyrics to LyricFind

LyricFind is an official lyrics licensing company that supplies lyrics to YouTube Music, Deezer, Pandora, iHeartRadio, and Amazon Music.

To get your lyrics listed on LyricFind:

1. Visit https://lyrics.lyricfind.com/artists.

2. Search for your artist name.

3. If your profile exists, click it to view your song list.

4. To submit missing lyrics or corrections:
Use the Contact / Feedback form on their site.
Provide your artist name, song title, and official lyrics.
If you are the verified artist, you can request corrections directly.

Once LyricFind processes your submission, your lyrics will appear on Google search results, YouTube Music, and other partners.

Example:

When someone searches your lyrics on Google, your song may appear in a special “Lyrics” panel, boosting your visibility.

# 6.5 Uploading Lyrics to Genius

Genius is one of the most popular lyric and annotation platforms, widely used by fans and journalists to explore song meanings. Here's how to use it effectively:

1. Go to https://genius.com.

2. Create a free Genius account.

3. Search for your song — if it doesn't exist, click "Add Song."

4. Enter your song title, artist name, and lyrics.

5. Once added, you can:
Annotate your lyrics (explain meanings, inspirations, or references).
Add album art, release date, and credits.

6. To verify as an official artist, contact Genius staff or apply through their community support.

Benefits:
Increases Google search visibility.
Lets you explain your story and connect deeper with fans.
Adds credibility and context to your lyrics.

# 6.6 Best Practices for Formatting and Submitting Lyrics

To ensure your lyrics are accepted by all platforms:
✓ Keep the text clean:
No extra spaces, emojis, or random capitalization.
Write line by line, with clear stanza breaks.

✓ Check for accuracy:
Transcribe exactly what’s in the released version.
Verify spelling and punctuation before submitting.

✓ Credit properly:
Include composer, lyricist, and producer names where applicable.
✓ Avoid duplicated entries:
Only submit your lyrics once per song. If it already exists, claim it instead of creating duplicates.
✓ Maintain consistent metadata:
Your song title, artist name, and metadata should match exactly with what appears on your distributor’s release (TuneCore, recordJet, etc.).

# 6.7 How to Sync Lyrics on Instagram and Spotify

Once your lyrics are published on Musixmatch, they'll automatically sync to:
Instagram Music Stories (so fans can use your lyrics in posts)
Spotify Canvas & Lyric View (real-time scrolling lyrics)

If you notice your lyrics aren't appearing:
1. Make sure your Musixmatch profile is verified.

2. Ensure your lyrics are timed and approved (not pending).

3. Double-check that your song metadata matches exactly with your distributor upload.

# 6.8 Benefits of Having Verified Lyrics

Having verified lyrics gives you multiple long-term advantages:
SEO Boost: Appears in Google lyric panels.
Fan Connection: Fans can sing along on Spotify and Instagram.
Professional Credibility: Helps music databases like AllMusic, Genius, and MusicBrainz identify your works.
Royalty Tracking: Official lyrics are used by publishers and performance rights organizations to verify ownership and usage.

# 6.9 Troubleshooting Lyric Issues

| Possible Cause | Solution |
| --- | --- |
| Log not synced | Use manual or online synchronization |
| Wrong metadata | Edit song properties |
| Lyrics not found | Add lyrics manually |
| Different version | Search by exact title and artist |
| Use of special characters | Remove or replace them |
| Submitted but not visible | Wait for moderation |
| Not supported by your device | Try another format |
| Lyrics offensive | Report via in-app tool |
| Synchronization delay | Adjust timing offset |
| Lyrics not displayed | Check if lyrics are enabled |
| Multiple versions available | Select the correct one |
| Incorrect encoding | Use UTF-8 |
| Duplicate entries | Merge or delete duplicates |
| Lyrics missing | Contribute by submitting |
| Unable to edit | Request edit permissions |
| Slow loading | Check internet connection |
| Lyrics not aligned | Use auto-sync feature |
| Wrong language | Filter by language |
| Cannot find lyrics | Use alternative sources |

# 6.10 Summary

Lyrics are an extension of your artistry—and in today's digital world, they are also part of your marketing, SEO, and brand identity.

By uploading and verifying your lyrics on Musixmatch, LyricFind, and Genius, you make your music discoverable on all major streaming and search platforms.

Verified lyrics connect your words to your name—ensuring that no one else can claim your work and that your fans can sing along, share, and celebrate your songs everywhere.

Next, we'll move into Chapter 7: Music Databases and Artist Registrations, where we'll explore how to register your music with platforms like MusicBrainz, Discogs, ISNI, and AllMusic to strengthen your digital music identity and authenticity.

# Chapter 7: Music Databases and Artist Registrations

## 7.1 Introduction: Why Music Databases Matter

While streaming platforms showcase your songs, music databases preserve your identity as an artist. They act as digital archives that record your music releases, credits, identifiers, and public information — making it easier for fans, journalists, and industry professionals to verify your career.

Having your name correctly listed in these databases ensures that:

- Your music credits are officially recognized.
- Your releases are linked globally across platforms.
- Search engines and knowledge panels (like Google's) display accurate information about you.
- Other artists or companies can't misuse your name or work.

Think of these databases as your digital ID system — they prove that you exist and own your creative work.

# 7.2 Understanding the Role of Music Databases

Music databases collect metadata such as:

- Artist name (stage and real name)
- Release titles
- ISRC and UPC codes
- Release dates
- Label/distributor information
- Genre and credits (composer, lyricist, producer)

This information is then shared with music services, publishers, and search engines, creating a verified ecosystem for your music.

# 7.3 Key Music Databases You Should Register On

Let's explore the most important ones every independent artist should know.

## 1. MusicBrainz

Website: https://musicbrainz.org
MusicBrainz is a community-driven music encyclopedia that stores metadata about artists, releases, and recordings. It's used by Spotify, Last.fm, and many others for artist verification and cataloging.

How to register:
1. Create an account at musicbrainz.org/register.

2. Add your artist name and biography.

3. Submit your releases by including:
Release title
Tracklist
ISRC and UPC codes
Distributor or label name
Release date and format (digital)

4. Add external links to your profiles (Spotify, YouTube, etc.).

Tip: MusicBrainz allows you to merge duplicates and edit data if fans submit incorrect information.

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## 2. Discogs

Website: https://www.discogs.com
Discogs is a massive music catalog and marketplace known for physical and digital releases. It's widely used by collectors, fans, and record labels.

Steps to add your profile:
1. Create a free account.

2. Search for your artist name — if it doesn't exist, create a new artist entry.

3. Add your singles or albums with full details.

4. Include cover art, release date, and catalog numbers (if available).

Benefit: Being listed on Discogs boosts your professional credibility and can even attract label or collector attention.

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## 3. AllMusic

Website: https://www.allmusic.com
AllMusic is a professional music database used by critics, radio stations, and streaming platforms to verify artists and credits. It's one of the most recognized profiles in search engines.

How to appear:
AllMusic data comes from TiVo (formerly Rovi).
To be included, your music must be distributed by a service that supplies data to TiVo (like TuneCore, CD Baby, or DistroKid).
Once your releases are live, AllMusic will automatically list your artist page with bio, genre, and discography.

Tip: You can contact AllMusic through their artist correction form to suggest updates or add your official website.

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## 4. ISNI (International Standard Name Identifier)

Website: https://isni.org
ISNI assigns a unique 16-digit identifier to creative individuals. It's recognized by libraries, databases, and Google Knowledge Panels as a verified author or artist ID.

Why it's important:
Your ISNI acts like your digital fingerprint, linking your music, writing, and creative works under one identity.
How to get an ISNI:
1. Go to isni.org.

2. Use their search tool to check if you already have one.

3. If not, apply through an ISNI registration agency (some music distributors or libraries can assign one).

Example:
AlwaysBeSmile's ISNI: 0000 0005 1423 9474

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## 5. VIAF (Virtual International Authority File)

Website: https://viaf.org
VIAF is managed by the OCLC and combines library authority data from around the world. It's often linked with ISNI and ensures your identity is recognized across institutions and search engines.

You don’t directly register with VIAF — it automatically lists profiles based on ISNI and national library records.
Tip: Once you have an ISNI, your VIAF entry usually appears automatically.

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## 6. IMDb (for Music Credits in Films and Media)

Website: https://www.imdb.com
IMDb isn’t just for actors — it also lists musicians credited in soundtracks, background scores, or related media.

Steps to add your credit:
1. Create an IMDb account.

2. Search your name — if not found, create a new name page.

3. Use the “Edit Page” option to add your soundtrack credits or artist info.

4. Include evidence such as distribution links or official releases.

Benefit: IMDb credits boost your professional image and link your music to film or digital media listings.

# 7.4 Connecting Databases Together

To create a unified digital identity:
1. Use the same artist name and biography everywhere.

2. Link your profiles between platforms (e.g., add your MusicBrainz link to AllMusic and ISNI).

3. Keep metadata (release title, ISRC, and UPC) identical across submissions.

4. Add your official website and social media links to every platform for SEO consistency.

Once all your profiles are interlinked, they reinforce one another — helping Google automatically build and verify your Knowledge Panel and improving your search visibility as a verified artist.

# 7.5 Maintaining Your Digital Presence

To keep your artist identity professional and up-to-date:

- Review your database profiles every few months.
- Add new releases, collaborations, or biography updates.
- Fix errors in metadata or credits promptly.
- Keep your contact email consistent across all platforms.
- Regularly back up all ISRC and UPC records in a spreadsheet for future use.

Pro Tip:

Once your presence grows, create a small press kit that includes:

- Your verified database links
- Biography
- Profile photo
- Streaming links
- Contact details

This can be shared with curators, media, or collaborators.

# 7.6 Final Words: Building Your Musical Identity

As an independent artist, you have more power than ever to control your music, image, and career. By distributing your songs properly, verifying your profiles, and registering in global databases, you build a solid professional foundation that proves your authenticity and creativity to the world.

Your journey from uploading music to building a verified artist identity shows dedication, professionalism, and love for your craft. Remember - music isn't just about sound; it's about presence, identity, and connection. Each verified profile, lyric submission, and registered release strengthens your name in the global digital music landscape.

Your name represents not only your art but your story, preserved forever in the digital world.

# End of Book

“The Independent Artist’s Guide to Music Distribution and Digital Identity”

By MD Abdul Ahad Shanto

# About the Author

**MD Abdul Ahad Shanto** (born 12 May 2001), also known by his stage name **AlwaysBeSmile**, is a **Bangladeshi Author and Musician**. Alongside creating uplifting music, he enjoys helping others learn new skills and languages. This book reflects his passion for making language learning fun and accessible.

Read more at MD Abdul Ahad Shanto's site.